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INTRODUCTION

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Over the last three decades, the role played by phenomena linked to the (re-)making of collective memory, or, more precisely, of collective memories in situations of societal and political change, has gained attention in the humanities and social sciences in general. Only in recent years has this subject been researched with respect to colonial and postcolonial settings (Sengupta 2009) and here also with respect to the Middle East.[1] Approaches are highly diverse, ranging from cultural studies to psychosocial perspectives. Rare but highly interesting exceptions studying the violent history of the Middle East from a gender perspective and focusing on contesting memories of women include works by Efrat Ben Ze'ev (2010), Ruth Rubio-Marín (2006), and Alison Baker (1998)—in addition to films like *The Forgotten* by Driss Deiback (2006). These studies link the general trend toward marginalizing or denying female experiences in the field of officially recognized memory production to the continuing hegemony of gender stereotypes that identify women with passive and "helping hand" roles, thus neglecting their distinct collective as well as individual contributions to society and history. Generally speaking, memory studies seem to suggest that representations of women as "self-abandoning" and "self-forgetful" are one common characteristic element of the making of collective memory. This may be explained by the fact that the making of collective memory is often linked to highly gendered and sexualized models of national, religious, or ethnic identity. Though fully aware that most of the terms describing phenomena of collective memory or collective forms of trauma are highly controversial, we decided not to engage in a more general theoretical debate here but rather to test such concepts with respect to the material presented in the case studies.[2] The following contributions address different ways in which personal and public memory are linked to or interact with each other.

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Anja Peleikis developed a similar approach in her study on the multiple personal and public memories in a confessionally mixed village in southern Lebanon. In a book published in 2006, she scrutinizes how recollections of the past are transmitted from one generation to the next and how, through this process, religious affiliations have been transcended by more powerful group identities (like age, gender, neighborhood, and profession). At the same time, confessional hierarchies have been redefined since the expulsion of confessional groups from the village. Thus, efforts toward reconciliation failed on the local level and—one could reason—prevented the emergence of a renewed social order (Peleikis 2006).

Memory studies deal with a highly ideological field. The politicization of memory sets limits to reconfiguring collective as well as personal forms of memory. A clear case is the completely different cultures of memory dealing with National Socialism and the Holocaust in the former West and East Germany, to cite a non-Middle Eastern example. As late as in 1994, an exhibition in West Berlin to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Claus von Stauffenberg's attempted assassination of Hitler caused fierce strife over the inclusion of communist resistance fighters in the exhibition and the national memorial. Similar conflicts existed in East Germany: Historians still debate whether memory in the German Democratic Republic prioritized the suffering of Communists over that of Jews.

The following contributions are linked to a project on memory politics in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that we were directing in the framework of the Berlin Collaborative Research Centre at Humboldt-University, called "Representations of changing social orders." Most of the papers were presented at a workshop on gendered memories in the MENA convened at the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin in June 2009. The papers brought together in this special issue on "Gendered Memory in the Middle East and North Africa: Cultural Norms, Social Practices, and Transnational Regimes" tie in with two different fields of research—memory studies and gender studies—linking theoretical insights from both fields to gain a deeper understanding of the ongoing processes of societal and political change in the MENA region in the light of highly complex and necessitative societal reconciliation. More particularly, the papers explore the tensions and interactions

between different forms of memory politics. To what degree did officially controlled efforts to process primary experiences, historiography, public images, and debates into a unified and simplified make-up of narrative, iconic, and ritual elements catered to the wider audience change over time? How did the gradual recognition of demographic, as well as socio-cultural pluralization on the one hand and political dynamics of change on the other, open up space for the production of alternative or counter forms of remembering? Special attention is given here to the gendered and gendering character of different memory politics, thus trying to fill a void in memory studies in general, in which—in spite of the existence of a number of relevant case studies—gender has largely been neglected up to now on the conceptual level. At the same time, applying a more constructionist understanding of gender, the papers focus not so much on women and men, as is often the case in this context, but analyze the processes of (un-)doing and (re-)negotiating gender.

The broad spectrum of rituals and material manifestations of memory culture provide a form of representation that gradually changes social orders, particularly in situations of accelerated transformation. Iraq, Lebanon, and Morocco—countries addressed in the following papers—are strong examples of how political change is mediated through competing views of the past that also interpret the present and constitute and prescribe models for the future. The papers cover case studies from the aforementioned three countries and represent three different types of political reconfiguration currently to be observed in the Arab world and in all of which memory politics from "above" and "from below" play a crucial role: the Iraqi case consisting of an externally imposed regime change, the Lebanese case consisting of a post-civil war situation, and the Moroccan case consisting of a moment of broadened political participation without regime change. The articles are devoted to different forms of (re-)constructing collective memory that accompany and, at the same time, construct and interpret processes of societal and political change. Gender here does not refer to fixed structures and sets of norms and practices, but is understood as a relational category that intersects with various processes of symbolic as well as structural differentiation and hierarchization. The papers privilege a constructivist perspective on gender that tries to understand how gender is (re-)produced and (re-)negotiated in situations of change. This runs counter to a certain

trend to focus on gender regimes and discourses as such. In the MENA, as elsewhere in the world, the articulation of women's rights as human rights has significantly gained in importance since the 1990s. The local and regional activism of women's rights groups, the politics of reform on the state level, and international legal and development policies, as well as transnational feminism, have all contributed to putting not only issues of rights and democracy, but also of gender justice on the agenda of political change in the MENA region. While critical research on the region often focuses on the "governmentalization" of transnationally formulated, generalized definitions of women's rights (and women's suppression), the papers in this issue examine the role played by transnational norms and instruments for renegotiating gender norms and gender relations.

All three countries analyzed in these essays witness a certain pluralization of the field of memory politics: Iraq since 2003, Lebanon since the Taif Agreement in 1989, and Morocco since the 1990s. In this context, new spaces for memory politics from below have been opened, especially with regard to past violent conflicts in the region, a dynamic that gained momentum during the 2011 uprisings in the Arab world. Not surprisingly, questions of societal reconciliation are currently emerging in all Arab states. These protests not only raise the question of how politics from below may successfully contest officially sanctioned versions of the past. They also call on us to understand how the more or less oppositional or deviant voices are produced and circulated. What are the normative references and the institutional devices that enable marginalized voices to be raised? How do these references and devices inform or shape representations of the past? Who is enabled to publicly speak for which group or segment of former victims of violence? What are the political consequences? What kinds of narratives are encouraged and which ones are excluded? And, finally, what is the role played by the media through which particular versions of the past "from below" are circulated? Generally speaking though, moments of societal and political crisis tend to freeze gender norms and to rely on gender stereotypes to legitimize old as well as new models of organization and legitimacy, but the dynamics of change itself may change over time due to political, economic, or other developments. A number of the contributions therefore critically investigate notions of collective memory and col-

lective trauma as such, taking up some of the recent debates on these concepts. Aleida Assmann (2008) has insisted that larger collectivities like ethnic groups or nations do not simply "have" a collective memory, but "make themselves one using different memorial media such as texts, pictures, monuments, anniversaries and commemoration rites." These papers explicitly take up the problem of the "making of" collective or other forms of public memories from different perspectives. Some more basically question whether the notion of "collective memory" as such is pertinent for adequately accounting for the complex ways by which personal memory is transposed into spheres of public memory and—vice versa—the ways public memories are selectively adopted and adapted in the framework of constructing meaningful personal accounts.

In this issue, Bettina Dennerlein looks at how the gender approach adopted by the Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Commission (ERC) established in 2004 is geared toward earlier women's rights and human rights activism, as well as to established state practices of at least selectively supporting human rights and women's rights. She argues that, in spite of a certain tendency to co-opt and depoliticize the subject of women's rights, the officially recognized gender approach also allows for strategies to broaden the basis for women's rights activism. Researchers and activists who have worked for the ERC consciously endeavor to translate women's experiences of violence during the "Years of Lead" into the language of universal human rights, thus granting them official recognition. Translating women's experiences of violence into the language of human rights also helps to "vernacularize" and thereby, at least potentially, enlarge the local anchoring of transnational standards. These processes are not free from pitfalls with respect to the possible marginalization of other idioms of social justice as well as with regard to their ongoing politicization.

Susan Slyomovics and Karin Mlodoch both deal with gendered memories in relation to the atrocities of human rights violations under Saddam Hussein of Iraq and Hassan II of Morocco, respectively. Both pay close attention to recently launched communal reparation projects in the respective countries. Notwithstanding the strong differences between the political histories of Morocco and Iraq (not least the degree and scope of state repression as well as the mere numbers of victims), there are also certain similarities. This is especially true with respect to

women and women's rights activism. Furthermore, there are similarities with regard to forms of reparatory justice and public recognition—instead of (Morocco) or in addition to (Iraq) criminal prosecution. Both papers present specific findings on gendered memories of violence and suffering in relation to and conflicting with dominant (national) narratives of violence.

Specifically, Slyomovics has observed and analyzed over a long period of time forms of public remembrance of human rights violations in Morocco and has closely followed the itineraries of former political prisoners. Her essay focuses on efforts to document Casablanca as an urban space of dissidence. Slyomovics scrutinizes a June 2009 local initiative to turn Derb Moulay Cherif, the site of Morocco's infamous secret prison and torture centre in the city of Casablanca, into a museum and a community center. Together with Fatna El Bouih, a well-known former political prisoner, Slyomovics envisages possibilities for a future project that seeks to document spaces of dissidence, women's testimonies, processes of museum-making, and monuments. In the Moroccan context again, the acts of recognizing and acknowledging historical truths are themselves seen as a form of justice—not least insofar as they denounce direct as well as structural forms of violence against women. Whether they will also help to the enable judicial prosecution of perpetrators in the future remains undetermined in the Moroccan case.

When in Iraqi Kurdistan it became clear after 2003 that the disappeared relatives would not return to their families, women's memories as Anfal survivors shifted from the theme of abandonment and mourning the disappeared towards emphasizing their own suffering and their own strategies to survive. In recent years, this shift was supported by an amelioration of the economic situation of the victim's families. This shift in women's self-perception and self-representation, as well as their claims to elucidation, acknowledgement, justice, and compensation, has led to, among other things, an initiative of women Anfal survivors for a self-designed memorial site representing their gendered experiences and memories and contrasting with the dominant representations of women as passive victims.[3] Several problems about the function and the shape of such a *lieu de mémoire* and the attached communal center were openly discussed. Should it be a memorial, a monument, a mourning site, a museum, a community center or a meeting place? Should it

focus on the suffering or on strategies for strength and survival? The debate about the memorial in Sumud/Rizgary gave women an opportunity to voice their claims. But these claims are uttered in a highly politicized environment that struggles to publicize Kurdish sufferings in order to advance the national cause on an international level. Mlodoch's article presents a highly interesting case of changing dynamics in the construction of collective memory, from excluding particular memories to partial inclusion and processes of renegotiation.

Andrea Fischer-Tahir looks at the construction of models of normative masculinity in Kurdish nationalist discourse on the Anfal Campaign of 1988. While in the framework of the nationalist narration, resistance during the Anfal Campaign has been coded as "male" and identified with armed resistance, persecution and endurance were identified with the stereotype of the black-clothed elderly rural "woman" mourning her disappeared male relatives. This not only helped to legitimize gender stereotypes and gender inequality. The nationalist discourse also led to the marginalization of male experiences of suppression, humiliation, and harassment that question the model of hegemonic masculinity. It was only with the introduction of the term "genocide" in scientific analyses and public debates since 2003 that this situation started to change. In adopting this new term with all its historical-moral as well as its transnational legal legitimacy, new possibilities to articulate experiences of male suffering and victimization were opened up that do not openly contradict established representations of (normative) masculinity. Since Fischer-Tahir was able to move constantly between Germany and Iraq during the last fifteen years, she provides rare insights into the changing of remembering Anfal among male fighters as reflected in media discourses as well as in ongoing academic or semi-academic publications.

Sune Haugbolle studies how gendered and sexualized tropes in Lebanese film, artwork, literature, and articles in the press serve as tools for reconfiguring public representations of competing memories of the civil war in spite of the politics of amnesia officially adopted with the drafting of the Taif Accords. More particularly, Haugbolle explores the ambiguous relationship between war and masculinity at the intersection of national discourses, sectarian models, and competing cultures of remembrance. He looks at how the public memory that depicts the

militiamen as the "ultimate culprits" of civil war may also be a way to consciously or unconsciously obstruct other, more complex aspects of the militia world—most notably sectarian violence. At the same time, the publicized memories of individual former militiamen can be seen as part of a process of dissociation from the parties for which they previously fought and the related sectarian versions of hegemonic masculinity. At the same time, Haugbolle closely scrutinizes the role played by the portrayal of women as the archetypal classless and sectless civilian victims.

Unlike other countries around the world, those in the MENA are moving forward with efforts to process recent and ongoing conflicts. For example, in Spain, the chapter of Francisco Franco's violence and the country's civil war from 1936-1939 is just beginning to be publicly reviewed, sixty years later. In contrast, the societies studied in this special issue are swiftly pursuing efforts to prosecute persecutors and the illuminate the plights of their victims. However, questions about connections between reconciliation, judicial prosecution, and universal jurisdiction—and the success of these efforts—remain unanswered. The following contributions only introduce this debate.

NOTES

1. See especially Saunders and Aghaie (2005), Makdisi and Silverstein (2006), Haugbolle and Hastrup (2008), Hartmann (2004), and Neuwirth and Pflitsch (2001).

2. For further discussion, see Hue-Tam Ho (2001).

3. See http://www.haukari.de/projekte/memorial/flyer_memorial_english.pdf (accessed on September 27, 2011).

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